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LETTER DATED 15 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I am writing to you in order to present the views of my delegation on the "Report of the activities of the United Nations Command for 1996" circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/1997/596) on 31 July 1997.

In that report, the United States totally distorted and concocted the facts, as if the responsibility for the paralysed Korean armistice system lay with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The full responsibility for the paralysed Korean armistice system lies with the United States, not the DPRK.

The following several cases testify to the deliberate and systematic attempts by the United States to paralyse the Korean armistice system.

Subparagraphs 13 (c) and (d) of the Korean Armistice Agreement were originally intended to provide for cessation of the introduction into Korea of reinforcing military personnel, combat aircraft, armoured vehicles, weapons and ammunition, for the purpose of preventing the build-up of armed forces and eliminating the source of recurrence of a war.

Those provisions were, in their true senses, the core in guaranteeing practically the maintenance of the armistice and clarifying the purposes and missions of the Armistice Agreement.

However, no sooner had the United States side signed the Armistice Agreement, than it introduced a huge quantity of combat matériel and weapons into south Korea, despicably dodging the inspections by the Armistice supervisory body.

The United States side disassembled 106 mortars and 38 B-26 combat aircraft before introducing them into south Korea on 20 July 1953 and 31 July 1953 respectively in the form of the knocked-down parts or spare parts packed in crates under the disguise of "supplies for PX", only to be detected afterwards and disclosed to the world.

This despicable introduction by the United States into south Korea of military equipment continued during the eight-month period following the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement up until 15 April 1954. Of that equipment, the Neutral Nations Inspection Teams (NNIT) only detected 177 combat aircraft, 465 artillery guns of various calibres, 6,400 rocket launchers of various calibres, 145 mortars of various calibres and 1,365 machine-guns of various calibres.

Since the NNIT appeared to be placing obstacles in the way of its war preparations, the United States side attempted to obstruct the NNIT activities in every way and announced at the 70th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission on 30 May 1956 that all the NNIT members must be withdrawn from the ports of entry in the south within a week.

Thus, the NNIT members posted at the ports of entry in the south were forcibly expelled on 9 June 1956.

Since then, the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), which had been conducting, through the NNIT, supervision and inspection of the introduction of military personnel and equipment, has been unable to carry out its mission. The NNSC thus had been placed in a functional paralysis.

Worse still, the United States side declared at the 75th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission that it would unilaterally abrogate subparagraph 13 (d) of the Armistice Agreement and would not submit annual reports concerning the replacement of the combat matériel.

Consequently, the Armistice Agreement has become de facto nominal, void of any legal guarantee for preventing the recurrence of a war and, in turn, the NNSC has been left with no mandate at all.

The United States cannot evade the responsibility for destroying the Military Armistice Commission.

The United States side, after making all its attempts to hamper the regular activities of the Military Armistice Commission, on 25 March 1991, designated a south Korean army officer as its "senior member" to the Military Armistice Commission, a position for which he had neither the qualifications nor the legal authority at all.

Despite repeated principled demands and warnings against it on the part of the DPRK, the United States side refused to withdraw its designation, thus completely paralysing the normal functioning of the armistice mechanism.

It is natural indeed, both from the legal point of view and in practical terms, that a senior member to the Military Armistice Commission should be designated by the actual party which has full authority and qualifications as a representative responsible for supervising the implementation of the Armistice Agreement and settling problems arising therefrom.

It is crystal clear to everyone that south Korea cannot be represented in the Military Armistice Agreement because it was a bitter opponent of the

conclusion of the Armistice Agreement and moreover because it neither joined the "United Nations Command" nor was a signatory to the Armistice Agreement.

This notwithstanding, the designation of a south Korean officer as a senior member of the Military Armistice Commission could by no means be interpreted as a senseless act in disregard of the fundamental principles of international law, an open challenge to a signatory to the Armistice Agreement and an impertinent act destroying the Armistice Agreement as well.

Since the Military Armistice Commission had ceased to exist the NNSC could likewise no longer carry out its functions.

Accordingly, the NNSC, which was already in a functional paralysis because of the abrogated provisions regarding its functions as specified in the Armistice Agreement, had to cease its existence. It was therefore inevitable that the NNSC member States had to withdraw their delegates as a matter of course.

As all these facts testify, the responsibility for the complete paralysis of the Korea Armistice Agreement lies entirely with the United States. The United States cannot evade this responsibility.

The United Nations should pay due attention to the continuous imprudent noises of war, military provocations and their consequent dangers on the Korean peninsula, in which the two hostile sides are confronting each other acutely with their huge armed forces along the Military Demarcation Line.

Furthermore, it cannot go unnoticed that though the situation on the Korean peninsula is so tense that even a minor accident can easily spread into an all-out war because of the paralysed old armistice system, there still remains a vacuum that has no mechanism for preventing such an accident.

Under such circumstances, the DPRK long ago put forward to the United States side a proposal that senior military officers of both sides sit down face to face to negotiate the establishment of a new mechanism in conformity with the actual situation in order to deter dangerous situations from arising, and has been waiting with patience for positive response.

The DPRK believes that it is only negotiations of this kind that are the key to resolving all the relevant issues.

The United States should refrain from an act of reversing black and white while resorting to the trickery of shifting the responsibility for its wrongdoing to others and respond with a sincere attitude to the DPRK's proposal.

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) KIM Hyong U
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its presidential statement of 27 February 1997 (S/PRST/1997/8), the Security Council encouraged me to continue consultations with the Somali parties and regional States and organizations on the role the United Nations can play in supporting peace efforts, including on specific options contained in my report (S/1997/135). It also requested me to continue monitoring the situation in Somalia and to report to it in an appropriate manner on those consultations and on developments in the situation generally.

2. As members of the Council are aware, I asked Mr. Ismat Kittani to visit the region as my Special Envoy (a) to assess the situation on the ground; (b) to ascertain the positions of the Somali factions and the regional governments and organizations concerned on matters related to national reconciliation and the establishment of a broad-based government; (c) to assess the extent to which recent regional and other peacemaking initiatives had advanced the Somali political process; (d) to review and explore the role the United Nations might possibly play to support the regional peacemaking efforts, including the options discussed in my report to the Security Council; and (e) to make recommendations on any future peacemaking role of the United Nations.

3. The present report summarizes the results of Mr. Kittani's mission.

II. VISIT BY THE SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE REGION

4. My Special Envoy visited the region from 6 to 20 August 1997 and held consultations with all major Somali groups. On 14 August, in Addis Ababa, he met the delegation of the Sodere group, led by the Current Chairman of the National Salvation Council (NSC), Col. Abdullahi Yusuf, and two of its five Co-Chairmen, Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Gabio. On 15 August, he met Mr. Mohammad Sallah Nour, "Foreign Minister of Somaliland", in Djibouti. On 20 August, he met a nine-member delegation of the Aidid group in Nairobi, led by

Mr. Hilowle Iman Omar, one of the "Vice Presidents of the Transitional Government".

5. My Special Envoy also consulted with senior Government officials of regional States and the leaders of regional and international organizations engaged in efforts to help resolve the conflict in Somalia. On his way to the region, he conferred with Senator Rino Serri, Vice Foreign Minister of Italy, outside Rome on 6 August and Mr. Amre Moussa, Foreign Minister of Egypt, and his colleagues, as well as Mr. Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, outside Cairo on 8 August. He held consultations in Addis Ababa with Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister, and Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Foreign Minister, of Ethiopia as well as Mr. Kinfe Abraham, Acting Executive-Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), on 13 August, and with Mr. Salim Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on 14 August. On 16 August, in Djibouti, he met Mr. Barkat Gourad Hamadou, Prime Minister, Mr. Mohamed Moussa Chehem, Foreign Minister and Mr. Ismail Omar Guellah, Chef de Cabinet, of Djibouti. On 17 August, in Sana'a, he held consultations with Mr. Ali Abdulla Saleh, President, and Mr. Abdul Karim Al-Iryani, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, of Yemen. In Nairobi, he met with Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Foreign Minister of Kenya and General Lazarus Sumbeiywo, Adviser to President Moi, on 19 August, and with Mrs. Sally Kosgei, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 20 August.

6. In Nairobi, he received briefings from the head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and the heads of United Nations agencies operating in Somalia, all of whose temporary offices are located in Nairobi. He was also briefed by representatives of the European Union and met the Acting Chairperson of the Somalia Aid Coordinating Body.

III. THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

7. Thirteen United Nations agencies continue to provide emergency humanitarian relief assistance to Somalia in collaboration with approximately 50 international and 10 national non-governmental organizations. Humanitarian interventions comprise joint as well as individual United Nations programmes and projects, focusing on the four priority areas of emergency, rehabilitation, reconstruction and governance assistance requirements. These programmes have been designed to take into account the varying operational environments within the country.

8. In December 1996, United Nations agencies launched the 1996-1997 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Somalia, calling for $46.5 million for joint programmes in five major areas: emergencies, reintegration, rehabilitation, food security and governance. In addition, a further $54 million was requested by individual United Nations agencies for their own projects. In response to the appeal, a total of $20,532,484 had been contributed as at 14 July 1997, meeting 20.4 per cent of the appeal's revised requirements.

9. The overall humanitarian situation remains difficult. Somalia remains susceptible to three types of emergency situations requiring immediate international response: natural disasters, such as floods, droughts and pestilence; epidemics, particularly of cholera and also those affecting livestock; and man-made disasters, typically war-related casualties, population displacements and famine.

IV. POSITIONS OF THE MAIN SOMALI GROUPS

Sodere group

10. The Sodere group welcomed the visit of my Special Envoy and expressed appreciation for it as the manifestation of interest in the situation in Somalia. They gave my Special Envoy a memorandum expressing their views on Somalia's political process.

11. They said that they had made substantial efforts to contact Mr. Aidid and Mr. Egal, not necessarily to ask them to join the Sodere process, but to open dialogue with them for the sake of national reconciliation. Immediately after the NSC was formed, it assigned two of its Co-Chairmen, Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Osman Atto, to hold a dialogue with Mr. Aidid, which subsequently contributed to the agreement reached in Mogadishu last January, as well as the Sana'a and the Cairo agreements. More recently, the NSC sent a delegation to Mogadishu in vain for a dialogue with Mr. Aidid on all issues.

12. The NSC, in spite of Mr. Aidid's refusal so far, pledged to seek his agreement to participate in the Bossaso Conference. The Sodere group/NSC hoped that he could be persuaded to engage in a dialogue. Regarding Mr. Egal, the NSC expressed the hope that it would be able to persuade him to participate in the Bossaso Conference.

13. Having set 1 November as the opening date for the Bossaso Conference, it stressed that the moment of truth had come for Somalia and that if Somalis had not been ready to put to good use the generous intervention of the international community earlier, they were now ready and determined to do so. From that standpoint, the NSC urged the international community not to turn its back on Somalia.

14. The NSC was grateful for the support of the IGAD countries, especially Ethiopia, for their efforts and for the endorsement by OAU of the IGAD position. It expressed the hope that the United Nations would support these regional organizations and the outcome of the Bossaso Conference. It called for the establishment of a United Nations trust fund to support the peace process as well as the reconstruction that would follow.

15. The NSC asserted that it represented the majority of Somalis and that only two groups, namely, part of the Habr Gedir and the Isaak clan, were not members. It expressed its readiness to make every effort to persuade these groups to participate in the national reconciliation process; however, it felt that no individual or group should have a veto over the national reconciliation process

which was under way and that one or two intransigent individuals, who refused to participate in the national reconciliation process, should be sanctioned.

16. The NSC confirmed its intention to proceed with the Bossaso Conference on 1 November, even without Mr. Aidid. At the same time, it expressed its willingness to meet with him at any time and place and its readiness to discuss the modalities for the national reconciliation conference, including the timing and venue, provided that these discussions were not used by Mr. Aidid for derailing the process.

17. Mr. Osman Atto said that he was solidly with the Sodere group; however, he had disagreements with some of its members in that he believed that rushing to hold the Bossaso Conference without adequate preparations, including securing the participation of all concerned, would be a mistake. In his view, a system of leadership based on a council rather than an individual would be the only way to address the problems of individual ambitions, and, prior to convening a national reconciliation conference, reconciliation in individual conflict areas, including Mogadishu, should take priority. He also wished as much United Nations involvement as possible.

The Aidid group

18. The nine-member delegation of the Aidid group gave my Special Envoy a message from him. It claimed that there was no region that was not represented in Mr. Aidid's "Transitional Government", that it controlled 11 out of the 18 regions of Somalia and that it enjoyed the confidence of the people of Somalia. When it further claimed that since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II, stability and normal life had returned to Somalia under the "Transitional Government" and that now United Nations humanitarian activities enjoyed full security, my Special Envoy pointed out the recent murder of a Médecins sans frontières doctor in Baidoa and inquired about the progress in its investigation. The delegation asserted that it was an isolated event. Commenting on the Sodere process, the delegation insisted that a majority of the 26 factions and groups belonging to the Sodere group were either non-existent or headed by chairmen who had been replaced. It accused Ethiopia of invasion, military occupation, violation of the arms embargo and interference in Somalia's affairs and asserted that Ethiopia's policy was a cause of instability in Somalia. It wanted the United Nations to address these issues. It expressed the view that Somalia's problems should be left for the Somalis to resolve.

19. The delegation asserted that the "Transitional Government" was not against national reconciliation or a national reconciliation conference per se and that, in fact, it was involved in reconciliation efforts in Mogadishu and elsewhere. However, it expressed various objections to the Bossaso Conference: the lack of general consensus among the Somalis on such a conference; inadequate preparations; and the lack of a neutral facilitator. My Special Envoy conveyed to the delegation the readiness of the NSC to be flexible with respect to the modalities of a national reconciliation conference, including the timing and venue, and requested that this be transmitted to Mr. Aidid.

The Egal group

20. The "Foreign Minister of Somaliland" stated that the primary reason for his travel to Djibouti was to ask my Special Envoy to convey to me that "Somaliland" wished to have, and it felt deserving of, more substantial United Nations assistance to consolidate the fragile peace there, having achieved peace and tranquillity on its own. He gave my Special Envoy a message from his "President".

21. In response to my Special Envoy's inquiry about his position on the peace process, he said that "Somaliland" would be ready for discussion only after its "southern brothers" had resolved their differences. Regarding the Bossaso Conference, he had major reservations about the representative credentials of some of the faction leaders who would be among the participants. He was not prepared to give a clear answer as to whether "Somaliland" would be willing to send an observer. Nevertheless, he said that "Somaliland" was willing to do anything to assist its "southern brothers" to achieve peace and that if asked by IGAD, "Somaliland" would be willing to host the Bossaso Conference.

22. He expressed the view that the resolution of the Somali conflict should be left to IGAD in order to insulate Somalia from external intervention with "hidden agendas". He did not consider United Nations activities as such intervention.

V. VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE "EXTERNAL ACTORS"

23. Senator Serri felt that the combination of efforts by the Somalis and the "external actors" could maximize the chances of success.

24. The Foreign Minister of Egypt stressed the importance of supporting the efforts of IGAD, spearheaded by Ethiopia with the support of Kenya.

25. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States briefed my Special Envoy on the League's recent contacts with both the Sodere group and the Aidid group in Cairo. He said that the League would welcome United Nations assistance for coordination.

26. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia felt that the political weight of the United Nations could make a difference. He said that with no government to ensure law and order, Somalia was becoming a major source of instability, with "extremists" and "terrorists" operating from there, the scope of which transcended the region. For this reason, he said, Ethiopia was convinced that any government, however weak, would be better than none, as it could at least give the neighbouring countries a framework for improving the situation. He expressed support for the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

27. The Acting Executive Secretary of IGAD said that IGAD and OAU were discussing the dispatch of a joint delegation to Somalia to persuade Mr. Aidid to talk to the Sodere group and also to persuade the Sodere group to be flexible.

28. The Secretary-General of OAU stressed that it was important for the United Nations to show increasing interest in the situation in Somalia and to have a greater presence, if not in Somalia itself, at least in the vicinity. He said that the national reconciliation conference should be supported. He briefed my Special Envoy on his most recent contacts with all the Somali groups, in which he had encouraged Mr. Aidid to talk with the others.

29. Mr. Salim informed my Special Envoy that OAU and IGAD were considering the possibility of dispatching a joint mission to Somalia, preferably prior to the national reconciliation conference, to convey the collective message of the continent. He also said that OAU supported the establishment of a United Nations trust fund for Somalia.

30. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Djibouti felt that peace in Somalia was of vital interest for Djibouti. IGAD would support the result of the Bossaso Conference and asked the international community to provide material support. They considered that the Sodere process and the Bossaso Conference were the only, and the most suitable, means to form a legitimate transitional authority, which would allow the people of Somalia to choose their leaders.

31. The President and the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yemen stressed that the situation in Somalia was of direct concern to Yemen, which had accepted many refugees. Yemen had offered to help hold the Bossaso Conference by assisting with providing security for the delegates.

32. The Foreign Minister of Kenya stressed the crucial importance of getting all factions on board. He felt that the location of the national reconciliation conference was open to discussion.

33. The consultations my Special Envoy held with the countries and organizations assisting in the peacemaking process, indicate that they share the belief that the Aidid group needs to be persuaded to join the peace process and that there is consensus among them that the United Nations could help coordinate their efforts so that the international community could be seen as speaking with one voice to the Somali groups, thus maximizing the chances of success in the peace process.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

34. Developments since the Nairobi understanding and the Sodere declarations, namely, the agreement reached in Mogadishu and the Sana'a and Cairo agreements, have given rise to hope that the Somali parties may have finally arrived at a stage where they will engage in serious consultations for peace.

35. My Special Envoy's mission has shown that the political process in Somalia is at another critical juncture. Having set 1 November 1997 as the opening date for the national reconciliation conference, the Sodere group made clear its intention to proceed with that conference, even if efforts by the Sodere group and the "external actors" fail to persuade Mr. Aidid to demonstrate readiness to engage in a serious dialogue with the Sodere group on issues concerning national reconciliation. There appears to be a substantial amount of sympathy for this

position in the region. Meanwhile, the Sodere group and all the "external actors" have pledged to do all they can to persuade Mr. Aidid not to reject the national reconciliation process.

36. I have directed that the following steps be taken as a matter of priority in line with recommendations made by my Special Envoy:

(a) A meeting at the ambassadorial level will be convened at Headquarters in September 1997, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs, with the participation of representatives of all the countries my Special Envoy visited (Italy, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen), together with those of IGAD, OAU, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Interested members of the Security Council will be invited to participate. The purpose of this meeting would be to harmonize views on mechanisms and measures to maximize the international community's efforts to help Somalia achieve national reconciliation. These might include joint missions to convey agreed messages to all Somali factions. The meeting could also discuss such proposals as a trust fund for Somalia and other measures to strengthen the United Nations supporting and coordinating role. The meeting could also develop into periodically held consultations at the ambassadorial level for the purpose of harmonizing the efforts of the international community for Somalia;

(b) In view of the contacts my Special Envoy had in the region, I have reviewed the role of UNPOS, which currently consists of a Director, one Professional assistant, and one secretary, and have concluded that its continuation and strengthening are essential in order to enable us to continue to extend assistance to those engaged in peacemaking efforts for Somalia. I have also accepted the conclusion of my Special Envoy that the personnel of UNPOS should undertake more visits to Somalia on a regular basis, security conditions permitting. I have therefore decided to add another Professional staff member to the Office. Unfortunately, with Mogadishu at phase V security status, it is still not possible to move UNPOS to Mogadishu at the present time. However, I shall keep the question of its relocation to Somalia under review. For planning and budgetary purposes, it is envisaged that UNPOS will continue to exist during the biennium 1998-1999. The necessary financial resources would need to be authorized and allocated;

(c) Every effort will continue to be made to help the Somali people in the relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development fields, as circumstances permit;

(d) A general review of the role of the United Nations in Somalia will be conducted in November/December 1997 in the light of the results of the national reconciliation conference, if held, or of the situation that obtains if it is not.

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LETTER DATED 16 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 15 September 1997 which I have received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).

Attached to the letter is the third periodic report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) of 6 August 1997. I should be grateful if you would bring the letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

[Original: French]

Letter dated 15 September 1997 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the third report, covering the period from 3 to 17 September 1997, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

(Signed) General Amadou Toumani TOURÉ
Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

Enclosure

Third report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(15 September 1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. On 6 August 1997, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1125 (1997), in which it approved the continued conduct by Member States participating in the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) of the operation to achieve its objective to facilitate the return to peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council authorized the Member States participating in MISAB and those States providing logistical support to ensure the security and freedom of movement of their personnel. It decided that that authorization would be limited to an initial period of three months, after which the Council would assess the situation on the basis of the reports submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations at least every two weeks by the Member States participating in MISAB.

2. This is the third report which the Security Council requested the Member States participating in MISAB to provide pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997). It was prepared by the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, which includes the representatives of the States members of the International Mediation Committee (Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) and a consultant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the MISAB Command, which consists of high-ranking officers representing all of the Member States participating in MISAB, including Senegal and Togo.

3. This report describes developments in the situation in the Central African Republic from 3 to 17 September 1997.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

4. Both the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements are under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, former President of the Republic of Mali, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee and personal representative of the heads of State concerned.

5. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Touré, includes one representative of each of the four heads of State of the members of the International Mediation

Committee, as well as a consultant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who acts as a diplomatic adviser to the Committee.

6. Thus, the International Monitoring Committee is the body which directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee. As such, it is the negotiating body among the various parties to the Central African crisis (President of the Republic, Government, presidential majority, Group of 11 opposition political parties, moderate opposition parties or CODEPO, centrists, former rebels, loyalist members of the armed forces, trade unions, civil society). As its name indicates, the International Monitoring Committee is primarily responsible for the political monitoring of the Bangui Agreements.

7. The International Monitoring Committee has adopted a plan of action which reflects the gist of the main provisions of the Bangui Agreements in the form of a timetable, which can be outlined as follows:

- Formation of a government of national union;

- Adoption of an amnesty law covering those who committed offences in the context of the third rebellion;

- Disarmament (surrender of weapons by the former rebels in honour and dignity, and recovery of weapons by MISAB from militias and civilian populations);

- Implementation of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence;

- Situation of former heads of State;

- Suspension of the parliamentary audit;

- Final phase of national reconciliation through a number of actions aimed at consolidating peace and security (organization of regional and sectoral awareness-raising seminars, organization of a National Reconciliation Conference, elaboration of an electoral code, access by political parties to the State media and other measures).

8. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, senior head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee. While it was initially under the command of Brigadier General Edjo Edouard Nkili of Gabon, since 2 August 1997 it has been headed by General Augustin Mombo Moukagni of Gabon, assisted by a Chief of Staff (Colonel Talla Niang of Senegal), a Legal Counsel (Colonel Sizing Walla of Togo) and the heads of each of the six contingents.

9. From 3 to 17 September 1997 the International Monitoring Committee took various steps to secure progress in relation to each of the elements in its

timetable which had been implemented only in part or not at all and which reflect the various political arrangements.

Government of national union

10. It should be recalled that on 1 September 1997 the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy was re-established in its original form, as constituted prior to 6 May 1997, following four months of crisis. Thus the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy in its entirety resumed its normal activities on 2 September with a meeting of the Council of Ministers presided over by the President of the Republic and Head of State.

Implementation of the amnesty act covering offences relating to the third rebellion and the misappropriation of public funds under investigation

11. This act, which was promulgated on 15 March 1997, is currently being implemented with a great deal of pragmatism and understanding. It is not being implemented blindly as regards the sanctions to be taken against citizens who may be illegally in possession of weapons following the 15-day deadline established by the law. The Head of State and the relevant political authorities have thus far shown a sense of responsibility and level-headedness and have taken into account the exceptional political situation in which this law should be applied in all its aspects.

12. This pragmatism has enabled the International Monitoring Committee to negotiate with the former rebels and to persuade them to hand over their weapons with honour and dignity. It is in that same context that Lieutenant-Colonel Konzzale, Minister to the Office of the Minister for Territorial Administration, who is responsible for public security and disarmament, has, as head of a technical commission consisting of, inter alia, 10 resource persons (deputies, area heads, former rebels) paid by UNDP, with the participation of the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB, been conducting an awareness-raising and weapons recovery campaign among the civilian population since 12 August 1997.

Disarmament

13. This is, without a doubt, the most delicate phase of the national reconciliation process. Two major phases are envisaged which will make it possible to carry out this operation effectively:

(a) The awareness-raising and voluntary participation phase;

(b) The investigation, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase.

14. The voluntary participation phase is the preliminary period which will end on 30 September 1997 as stipulated in the ministerial order of 5 September 1997. Its purpose is to raise the awareness of the Central African people by a campaign conducted on the radio, television and in the written press and also by putting up banners and posters bearing slogans supporting peace, national unity, national reconciliation and disarmament on the main roads of Bangui. Any patriotic citizens who turned in their weapons of their own accord would be

rewarded for doing so, in order to encourage all the other ones to return any weapons they might have in their possession. It should be pointed out here that this is in no way a weapons buy-back operation.

15. After recovery of the weapons of the former rebels, the second phase of disarmament will involve collecting weapons from civilians, militias and illegal holders of weapons. For this purpose the International Monitoring Committee, in agreement with the Government of the Central African Republic, has recruited 10 resource staff (deputies, neighbourhood leaders, former rebels, opinion leaders) as chairmen of local disarmament committees in their respective zones. This staff, following deployment to districts, established disarmament committees in each neighbourhood. Their role is to inform the local population through neighbourhood meetings, rallies, talks, discussions and small gatherings and neighbourhood visits, so as to convince the population of the need to turn in illegally held weapons.

16. UNDP has established funding in the amount of $40,000 for the 10 resource staff, dignitaries, neighbourhood leaders and opinion leaders. People voluntarily turning in weapons or helping in their collection will receive a token reward. The reward, in the amount of 2,500 to 5,000 CFA francs ($5-10) according to the type of weapon, is intended primarily to exonerate civilians turning in weapons. With effect from 1 October 1997, anyone with weapons in their possession will be the target of legal action and the authorities will make use of the police and constabulary as needed.

17. The investigations, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase will begin immediately following the first one. It will involve collaborating with informers compensated according to the quality of their information. That will make it possible to locate any weapons caches. During this second period anyone found to be illegally in possession of a weapon will be handed over to the authorities. In addition, MISAB will conduct searches, together with the national defence and security forces other than the presidential security force.

18. The awareness-raising campaign of the Technical Commission on Disarmament, presided over by Lieutenant-Colonel Konzzale, was started on 12 August 1997 and is continuing in the various areas of the city of Bangui and at the level of the various religious groups, as well as on radio and television.

19. Like the meetings with Protestant leaders on 18 August 1997 and Muslim delegates on 23 August 1997, Minister Konzzale, accompanied by Ambassador Mongbé and Captain Saulet, chaired an important awareness-raising meeting with Catholic community leaders.

20. On Saturday, 6 September, a special awareness-raising campaign was conducted in the Pétévo neighbourhood, previously under the control of the former rebels, to demonstrate to the population how to turn in weapons and munitions. The meeting, presided over by Ambassador Mongbé, included enactments and songs which showed the dangers of holding military weapons and which celebrated peace.

21. On Wednesday, 10 September, imams in the city of Bangui received at the Central Mosque a delegation from the Disarmament Technical Committee, headed by

Minister Konzzale, to hear more detailed explanations regarding the procedures for turning in weapons on peaceful terms.

22. To date the results obtained in the area of disarmament are as follows: since the signing of the Truce Agreement of 28 June 1997 and of the Ceasefire Agreement of 2 July 1997, the following weapons have been handed over to MISAB:

Heavy weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (1-15 September 1997)
120 mm mortars	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 4	
81 mm mortars	surrendered: 7 out of a total of 15	
60 mm mortars	surrendered: 9 out of a total of 19	
14.5 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 6 out of a total of 6	
12.7 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 1 out of a total of 3	
75 mm recoilless guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 2	
73 mm anti-tank rocket launchers	surrendered: 64 out of a total of 67	1
Rocket-propelled grenades	surrendered: 6 out of a total of 11	1
Total	surrendered: 97 out of a total of 127	3
	(weapons recovered: 76.37 per cent)	2.36 per cent

Light weapons

Designation		Quantity	Increase (1-15 September 1997)
Hand-guns (misc)	surrendered:	7 out of a total of 111	
Submachine-guns	surrendered:	221 out of a total of 459	12
Assault rifles	surrendered:	198 out of a total of 541	22
MAS 36-49/56-M14 rifles + muskets	surrendered:	489 out of a total of 1,181	69
Light machine-guns	surrendered:	47 out of a total of 80	2
.30-calibre machine-guns	surrendered:	13 out of a total of 17	
Total	surrendered:	987 out of a total of 2,389	115
	(weapons recovered:	41.31 per cent)	4.81 per cent

An appreciable quantity of explosives of various kinds has recently been recovered and will shortly be carefully sorted.

23. A quantity of munitions of various types was recovered and packaged. The status of these munitions as at 15 September 1997 is set out below:

Designation	Quantity	Remarks
5.56 mm rounds	68 150	
7.5 mm SLC rounds	14 000	
7.5 mm S/B rounds	87 250	+ 20 = 87 270
7.5 mm X rounds	34 000	
7.5 mm X S/B rounds	135	
7.62 mm rounds, NATO	4 700	
7.62 mm SB rounds, NATO	11 262	
7.62 mm Kalashnikov rounds		+ 242
7.62 mm long rounds	119 640	+ 01 = 119 641
7.62 mm Tokarev rounds	900	

Designation	Quantity	Remarks
.30-calibre S/B rounds, US		
9 mm Para rounds		
9 mm Walter rounds	1 350	
.12-calibre riot control rounds	711	
12.7 mm rounds		
14.5 mm rounds	13 900	
37 fragmentation hand grenades	1 613	Fuse assembly unserviceable
Fragmentation hand grenades, China	2 020	+ 4
RPG 7 rockets	354	
37 stun hand grenades	979	Fuse assembly unserviceable
FL LAC F4 hand grenades	1 225	
F4 hand grenades	316	
60 mm mortars	1 663	+ 12
81 mm mortars	633	
120 mm mortars	50	+ 2 = 52
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, US	166	
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, China	223	No weapons in inventory
M79 40 mm rounds, US	6 060	No weapons in inventory
Time fuses (inactive)	23 252 325	
7.5 mm grenade cartridges	755	No rifle grenades

GR FLG AP34 + 03

DFRUSS + 01

A significant quantity of miscellaneous munitions, handed over loose, not suitable for firing, will be destroyed by the competent weapons and munitions units. An analysis will be made available in due course.

Recommendations from the General Meeting on National Defence

24. It appears that quite a few of the claims made by the former rebels could be answered by responsible implementation of the 282 recommendations made at the General Meeting on National Defence which was held in August 1996 at Bangui. That is why the International Monitoring Committee, true to the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proceeded, in April 1997, to set up an ad hoc committee to examine the said recommendations carefully and to set up a schedule for their implementation, breaking them down into categories according to what could be applicable in the short-, medium- and long-term based on the sensitivity of the areas to which the recommendations relate and, above all, the financial resources that would have to be mobilized. The results of the work of the ad hoc committee, which was presided over by a leader of the opposition, General Timothée Malendoma, a former prime minister, have already been

transmitted by the International Monitoring Committee to the Ministry of Defence for implementation at the various relevant levels. Since the International Monitoring Committee is merely a mediating body, it must leave the decisions on these matters to the relevant Central African authorities, while remaining ready to serve as arbitrator should the need arise.

Situation of former heads of State

25. A revised bill has just been prepared by the Government for presentation to the National Assembly at its next session, which will be held in October. Assurances in this regard were provided to the International Monitoring Committee by the expanded bureau of the National Assembly at the meeting on 4 September 1997.

Suspension of the parliamentary audit

26. The Bangui Agreements call for the suspension, then the abandonment "of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit" opened in respect of persons presumed to have misappropriated public funds under the previous regime, for it was understood that the audit had been conducted in a very selective manner and was creating more problems than it was resolving. The International Monitoring Committee, respecting the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proposed that the Central African Republic should, by a legislative act, formally renounce proceedings against authors of offences identified by the parliamentary audit. It was generally agreed that such an act would undoubtedly be taken in the context of the next session of the National Assembly.

National reconciliation

27. Each of the points mentioned above constitutes as many phases on the road leading towards national reconciliation. The present section therefore concerns the final phase of this exciting process.

28. The International Monitoring Committee, supported by UNDP, is already engaged in making preparations for awareness-raising seminars, symposia and meetings; the first phase will take place at the provincial level and be targeted at specific groups (such as trade unions, women's organizations and youth movements), and the second phase will take place nationally, in the form of a national reconciliation conference, as recommended by the Bangui Agreements. For this purpose, the Committee is working in close cooperation with the Minister for Human Rights, National Reconciliation and Promotion of a Democratic Culture, who chairs the technical commission on awareness-raising under the patronage of the Prime Minister. At the most recent weekly meeting, held on 27 August 1997, the participants appraised the cost of each of the activities in question and targeted potential sources of funding. Starting on 20 September 1997, missions to identify potential participants in the regional preparatory seminars for the national reconciliation conference will be sent to the five selected areas.

29. In the context of the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces, the International Monitoring Committee had requested UNDP to set up a fund to assist military personnel wishing to leave active service in returning to

civilian life, and UNDP had agreed to do so. UNDP launched a project on demobilization, retraining and reintegration for the Central African Armed Forces, which would make it possible to reduce the cost of operating the armed forces and facilitate their restructuring. All Member States and international organizations may make contributions to the fund in question, which will initially be for an amount of approximately $2 million. A first estimate indicates that 1,000 or more soldiers will be involved in this project. The UNDP Resident Representative in Bangui is awaiting the arrival of the project head to launch the operational phase.

COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

30. Pursuant to its mandate, the International Monitoring Committee maintains constant contact with the various Central African authorities to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Bangui Agreements. In this connection, it is regularly consulted both by the President of the Republic and head of State and by the Prime Minister and head of Government, as well as by the National Assembly, on a considerable number of issues concerning the life of the Central African nation.

31. Thus, an International Monitoring Committee delegation, composed of Lieutenant Colonel Mahamat Achakir, Coordinator a.i., Ambassador René-Valéry Mongbé, Diplomatic Counsellor, Mr. Oumar-Aba Traoré, Permanent Secretary, and Mr. Abel Balenguele and Ms. Fernande Françoise Sackannot, national consultants, met on 4 September 1997 with the officers of the National Assembly, expanded to include the heads of the various permanent committees and parliamentary groups, to participate in a working meeting. This meeting allowed the international Monitoring Committee delegation to report on the status of the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and to stress the need for all parties concerned to continue to show their good will in solving unsettled problems.

32. The officers of the National Assembly were very much encouraged by the results of this meeting, but they also expressed their concern about the problem of unpaid back wages, which remains a constant source of social upheaval. Accordingly, they requested the International Monitoring Committee to continue to provide its support to the competent Central African authorities in their efforts during the resumed negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions.

33. The International Monitoring Committee, acting on behalf of MISAB and/or on its own behalf, maintains regular contacts with international organizations, including UNDP and foreign diplomatic missions based in Bangui, with a view to requesting their diplomatic, financial and material support for mediation initiatives in the Central African Republic.

34. In the period covered by this report, the International Monitoring Committee was received by the President of the Republic and by the Prime Minister to discuss, among other things, issues relating to the recovery of weapons in circulation among the civilian population and various measures relating to economic recovery and the difficult social situation stemming from the six-months' accumulation of back wages. On the morning of

11 September 1997, dozens of Bangui University students tried to raise barricades on the Avenue des Martyrs, the main thoroughfare in Bangui, to protest against the six-months' backlog in the disbursal of university scholarships. Law enforcement officials broke up the demonstration without difficulty. No injuries were reported, and MISAB did not have to intervene.

35. On Friday, 12 September 1997, the International Monitoring Committee met successively with the following groups: a delegation of the parties of the presidential majority and the leaders of the Group of 11 Opposition Parties, the Coalition of Opposition Parties and the Group of Centrists. The purpose of these meetings was to prepare for the implementation of the remaining stages of the timetable, in particular regarding the situation of former Presidents and the suspension of the parliamentary audit. The Committee took advantage of these meetings to request the various groups of political parties to become involved in the awareness-raising campaign with a view towards disarmament. All the groups committed themselves to participate.

36. Project CAF/97/001, through which UNDP contributes its logistical and technical support, will probably be terminated at the end of September 1997 for lack of funds. In a letter dated 4 September 1997 addressed to the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, the Resident Representative of UNDP in Bangui drew attention to this situation, but noted that Ambassador Mongbé and the consultant Abel Balenguele, whose contracts expire on 31 October, could continue their mission until that date.

37. It is clear that the continuation of the Committee's activities as a mediating body will depend either on the willingness of UNDP officials to prolong the project or on finding another source of funding. In any case, it is difficult to see how the mediation effort, and thus the rest of the process, can continue without a mediator.

DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

38. It should be recalled that, at the request of the mediator, General Amadou Toumani Touré, and with the agreement of the Conference on Consensus-Building and Dialogue, held in Bangui from 11 to 16 January 1997, the heads of State of Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad decided to send an inter-African force with logistical support from France. This force, known as the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), includes, in addition to troops from Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad (the countries members of the International Mediation Committee), troops from Senegal and Togo, as a result of the decision of President Abdou Diouf and President Gnassingbé Eyadema to contribute to this gesture of African solidarity.

39. The activities of MISAB are governed by the mandate assigned to it by the heads of State concerned (see S/1997/561). These daily activities are many and complex, and can be summed up as actions aimed at preventing confrontation between the two main forces in question, the loyalists of the Central African Armed Forces and the former rebels.

40. MISAB, which is deployed throughout the city of Bangui, is ensuring security in all neighbourhoods of the Central African capital by occupying 20 surveillance posts, and is carrying out patrols nightly in each of the city's eight districts.

41. The MISAB force currently consists of six contingents with a strength of 796 soldiers (officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks), distributed as follows:

Burkina Faso	114
Chad	147
Gabon	149
Mali	113
Senegal	153
Togo	120

The force is provided with a French logistical support command unit, with 88 men. A French liaison and assistance detachment, with 39 men, has been made available to MISAB.

42. Owing to the development of organized crime, with the passive or active complicity of the former rebels, the activities of MISAB have been extended, with the agreement of the parties concerned, to operations to maintain security in the various neighbourhoods. Since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 2 July 1997, MISAB has participated, on the basis of a consensus, in joint security patrols with approximately 120 men, consisting of MISAB personnel, loyalists and rebels in all districts of Bangui.

43. A major coordination meeting was held on Tuesday, 9 September 1997, attended by the heads of all defence and security services in the country, members of the International Monitoring Committee and a delegation from the MISAB Command. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the activities of the joint (MISAB/Central African Armed Forces/Gendarmerie Nationale/Central African Police) security patrols which have been operating since June and the efforts to recover weapons. The meeting was followed by an announcement that, in keeping with the ministerial order that had been issued, the awareness-raising and voluntary-participation phase would end on 30 September 1997, while the second phase, during which the legislation in force with regard to the illegal possession of weapons would be enforced to the fullest extent, would begin on 1 October.

44. Apart from the security patrols which have brought peace and quiet to Bangui, MISAB is the only force to receive requests for assistance from all neighbourhoods in the city. During the period from 3 to 15 September 1997 these included:

Humanitarian assistance

- 6 medical evacuations during the night for various injuries;

- 7 medical evacuations during the night for childbirth;

- 3 medical evacuations for various illnesses.

Responses to night-time calls relating to assaults

- 15 responses involving cases where persons were threatened, assaulted or robbed.

These requests make it abundantly clear that MISAB has been fully integrated in the social fabric and has won the confidence of all segments of the population of Bangui.

45. In the daytime, it is also MISAB that provides security and escorts for convoys to supply fuel, a strategic product to be delivered to all the stations of PETROCA, the national petroleum products distribution company, from the Kolongo fuel depot, which is located in an area previously controlled by the former rebels. MISAB was deployed to complement the actions of the various security services, which had been weakened by the rebellion.

46. During the fortnight from 3 to 15 September 1997, MISAB security activities resulted in the following:

Reports

- 5 muggings;

- criminal activity by a 9-member gang;

- 3 burglaries;

- 4 robberies (cash, various articles and items of equipment);

- 3 car hold-ups.

The perpetrators of these offences were apprehended and turned over to the Gendarmerie Nationale Centrafricaine, which conducted investigations and filed reports. It should be noted that the crime rate in Bangui and the surrounding area has fallen significantly since the previous report. There has been a distinct improvement in the security situation.

47. The Central African police force have resumed their operations in the main streets of Bangui, freeing the Presidential Guard to focus on the strategic points which fall under their control by law. This points to a considerable relaxation of tension among the entire population of Bangui, which now feels that the state of emergency is over. Economic and cultural life and organized sports are resuming, as are international contacts. Bangui appears to be rising from the ashes reborn.

48. MISAB receives logistical support from the following sources:

(a) Each of the participating States with troops in Bangui provides its personnel (officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks) with their regular pay and supplies them with weapons;

(b) France, which was an observer of the Bangui Agreements, has agreed to provide logistical support to the various contingents as follows:

- Payment of the soldiers' total food allowance and daily subsistence allowance at the rates currently applicable to Central African military personnel;

- Payment of rents for the buildings used by military personnel and the MISAB Command;

- Provision of tactical and support vehicles for the force;

- Supply of fuel and vehicle maintenance;

- Supply of office equipment.

An overall evaluation of the cost of deploying MISAB in Bangui cannot be conducted until the end of the mission. However, taking all expenses into account, the cost of the logistical support provided to MISAB by France amounts to some 350 million CFA francs a month, or approximately $600,000;

(c) The Government of the Central African Republic is supplying vehicles for use by command personnel;

(d) The Organization of African Unity (OAU) made a special grant in the amount of $40,000 in March 1997 to assist the various contingents. A second special grant of $60,000 has been made jointly to the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB.

49. In the course of the various operations conducted by MISAB, and particularly during the confrontations of 22 and 23 March and 20 to 26 June, the force suffered the following losses: 6 dead (3 Chadian soldiers, 2 Gabonese soldiers and 1 Senegalese soldier) and 20 wounded (13 Chadian soldiers, 5 Senegalese soldiers, 1 Malian soldier and 1 Gabonese soldier).

Conclusions

50. The current experience with the Central African crisis is unique and is all the more stimulating in that it is unlike any previous experience. However, there is a risk that this progress may be jeopardized in view of the social problems associated with the payment of outstanding back wages, pensions and scholarships. It may also be cut short if:

(a) UNDP does not continue to provide logistical and technical support in one form or another to the International Monitoring Committee, a mediation authority whose presence in the capital would seem to be necessary for some time

to come. It is generally hoped in Bangui that the Committee will continue to provide political guidance to MISAB and act as a mediator between those in power and the opposition;

(b) The mandate of MISAB is not extended (even if it has to be changed in the long term) so that security and peace-building can be ensured until the next round of elections, scheduled for 1998.

51. It must be pointed out that, owing to the insufficiency of the African countries' own resources, logistical support from the international community, along the lines of the support which France has provided to MISAB and which remains open to contributions from all other States, is still needed.

52. The International Monitoring Committee and MISAB welcome the understanding of this issue expressed by the Security Council after its consideration of the first two reports. They hope that the appeal made to the international community by the President of the Council will be met with action.

53. It is fitting to mention here the ways in which life in Bangui and the rest of the country has returned to normal (or nearly so):

- Virtually all government offices have resumed operations as a result of the newly restored peace and the recent efforts by the Government to pay monthly salaries on time, even though it is still unable to solve the sensitive issue of back pay;

- Schools and universities ended the academic year under satisfactory circumstances: even examinations went forward as usual;

- Markets have resumed their normal operations;

- Public transport is working and traffic is once again heavy in commercial areas and the surrounding neighbourhoods;

- Airlines (Air Afrique, Air France and Air Gabon in particular) have resumed regular service to Bangui;

- Lastly, the free movement of persons and goods from place to place within the capital, which had been a divided city since the third rebellion, has become a reality.

54. Bangui has entered a new era with determination, an era marked by a gradual rebuilding of confidence and the resumption of activities in numerous spheres, which is a sign that peace has been restored. That peace must now be consolidated.

UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

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17 September 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 16 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 16 September 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, conveying Iraq's comments on Security Council resolution 1129 (1997). In the letter, Iraq reaffirms the need to respect the principle of parallelism between the flow of Iraqi petroleum and the provision of humanitarian goods to Iraq, and calls on the United States and the United Kingdom to desist from hindering the smooth and speedy approval of contracts.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Identical letters dated 16 September 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Having examined Security Council resolution 1129 (1997) of 12 September 1997, we should like to make the following comments:

When resolution 986 (1995) was adopted, many Council members characterized it as respecting humanitarian principles, citing as evidence of this its second and third preambular paragraphs, in which the Council states that it is "concerned by the serious nutritional and health situation of the Iraqi population" and that it is "convinced of the need ... to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people". Moreover, paragraph 2 of the memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the implementation of that resolution (S/1996/356) states that the distribution plan referred to in paragraph 8 (a) (ii) of resolution 986 (1995), which has to be approved by the Secretary-General, constitutes "an important element in the implementation of the resolution".

Accordingly, when we constantly stress the overriding need for compliance with the principle of parallelism between the sale of petroleum and the provision of the food, medicine and other humanitarian needs included in the procurement and distribution plan, we do so for sound legal and logical reasons, since the proceeds from the sale of petroleum is to be used to purchase supplies with a view to distributing them quickly to the entire population of Iraq, thereby ensuring that all the elements of resolution 986 (1995) are implemented simultaneously.

In focusing its attention on the flow of petroleum, as was recently the case in the discussions that led to the adoption of resolution 1129 (1997), the Security Council has deviated from the basic objective of the oil-for-food formula by ignoring its most important elements. This cannot be accepted by any fair-minded person. In this regard, it is most regrettable that the United States and the United Kingdom recently prevented the other members of the Security Council from applying the principle of parallelism; this has increased the time lag between the export of Iraqi petroleum and the provision of humanitarian supplies to Iraq.

In paragraph 56 of his recent report (S/1997/685), the Secretary-General describes this situation very clearly. He states that uncertainties in the arrival of food and other items have caused great difficulties, particularly in the agricultural and health sectors. He urges all parties involved to devote renewed effort to ensuring that the processing, approval and delivery of humanitarian goods is carried out expeditiously in order to minimize the technical difficulties encountered in the implementation of the first distribution plan. In paragraph 19 of the report, the Secretary-General points out that in the water and sanitation, electricity, education and agricultural sectors no supplies have yet arrived.

Although more than 100 days have elapsed since the end of the first phase of the procurement and distribution plan, the secretariat of the Security

Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) still has around 60 contracts that it has yet to process and circulate to Committee members. More than 70 contracts are still on hold at the request of the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom, and these countries have blocked a further 21 contracts.

Given this clear picture, any reasonable person cannot but reject the claims of the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom that they strove for the adoption of Security Council resolution 1129 (1997) in their desire to meet the needs of the Iraqi people. This claim is an empty one, and it completely contradicts the reality that we have just described in facts and figures in this letter.

The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom have ignored the fact that Iraq is not responsible for any shortcomings or defects in the drafting of Security Council resolution 1111 (1997) or for any improper implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995). The objective of the United States and the United Kingdom, which sponsored the draft resolution that was adopted as Council resolution 1129 (1997), does not in any way proceed from the humanitarian considerations referred to by the representatives of those two countries at the meeting of the Council held on 12 September 1997. Their basic and sole objective was to achieve narrow political objectives and to reiterate groundless allegations that are refuted by all the facts of the implementation of the first phase of the memorandum of understanding and the procurement and distribution plan, some of which I have referred to in this letter.

Clearly, the important point now is that there should be a verdict during the coming weeks on the extent of the credibility of the Security Council and in particular on the credibility of two of its members, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, in complying with the principle of parallelism between the flow of Iraqi petroleum and the provision of humanitarian items and goods to Iraq, particularly when the Council has acknowledged the incorrect and unacceptable situation relating to the delay in the importation of humanitarian goods into Iraq as explained in the Secretary-General's report (S/1997/685). Without doubt, the positions of the United States and the United Kingdom will be judged on the basis of the conduct of their representatives in the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) because it is they who are obstructing the smooth approval of contracts for the provision of humanitarian items to Iraq. These countries must change their methods of dealing with pending first-phase contracts and the contracts to be submitted for the second phase by desisting from obstructing the smooth and rapid approval of contracts, because this is what is required of them by the principle of parallelism and balance between the flow of petroleum and the provision of humanitarian goods to Iraq in accordance with the procurement plan approved by the Secretary-General. We hope that the members of the Council will observe this conduct closely.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter brought to the attention of all members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs

UNITED
NATIONS

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S/1997/718
18 September 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 17 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 12 September 1997, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

97-24530 (E) 190997

/...

Annex

Letter dated 12 September 1997 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the eighth monthly report on Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Monthly report to the United Nations Security Council on SFOR operations

SFOR operations

1. Approximately 36,500 SFOR troops are currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all members of NATO and from 20 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 July-20 August), there were no significant changes in the overall size and composition of the force. However, the multinational divisions started to make force adjustments in preparation for the municipal election. SFOR has continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance by means of ground and air patrols and to make random inspections of weapons cantonment sites. During the period, approximately 2,500 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, while the SFOR helicopter fleet flew 124 hours.

3. Support continues to be provided to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), with SFOR maintaining its regular, coordinated training missions over Eastern Slavonia in order to exercise plans to provide close air support if necessary.

4. In pursuance of a policy communicated to the Entity Presidents by the SFOR Commander on 7 August to assist with restructuring and reforming the Entity Police Forces, on 15 August General Saric, Commander of the Republika Srpska Specialist Police, was given a copy of the supplementary instructions to the parties concerning the Specialist Police. These lay out the procedures to be followed during the period in which the Specialist Police are subject to annex 1A of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, prior to their recognition and certification by the International Police Task Force (IPTF) to act as a component of the civil police. General Saric indicated that he would comply with these instructions, and progress since then has been good. The same instructions have been passed to the Federation Police authorities, where restructuring under IPTF is more advanced, for compliance by 30 August.

5. On the morning of 17 August, members of the Specialist Police loyal to Mrs. Plavsic took control of the Public Security Centre in Banja Luka. SFOR was requested by the Serb Member of the Collective Presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, to allow the Ministry of the Interior Specialist Police to expel them. Permission was denied and SFOR took action to deal with the breach of the supplementary instructions to the parties. At the same time, IPTF responded to the direction from the Office of the High Representative to investigate reports of the existence of evidence, within the Public Security Centre, concerning serious violations of human rights and telephone interception. SFOR was asked to assist in providing area security. This investigation discovered unauthorized arms, and IPTF continues to examine possible evidence of the bugging of telephones of President Plavsic and Constitutional Court judges. By the evening of 18 August the Public Security Centre had been handed back to the Ministry of the Interior Civil Police. On the morning of 20 August, SFOR and the IPTF returned to the

Public Security Centre and other police sites in Banja Luka to investigate reports of further irregularities. Civil police from outside Banja Luka, who occupied these facilities, were expelled. Large quantities of arms and ammunition were discovered. These were confiscated and are still being inventoried, but initial estimates are that they included up to 12 tons of equipment, including automatic rifles, rocket launchers, grenades and mines.

6. Between 1 and 5 August 1997, protest actions against the return of Muslims to the area occurred in Jajce and in the valley immediately east of the town (comprising the villages of Divicani, Lendici, Bucici, Kruscica and Donja Sibenica). Muslims were harassed and fled the villages of Bucici and Lendici, and a number of roadblocks were set up. SFOR dismantled the roadblocks and maintained a presence in the area in order to prevent violence and destruction or vandalism. A return programme for the period 16 to 21 August 1997 was agreed. In that time 341 heads of family (equivalent to 1,200 people) returned to the valley. The only incidents were two land mine explosions which occurred in Divicani. SFOR asked explosive ordnance disposal teams to assess the situation and clear the area.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. Overall, the entities remain substantially compliant in most aspects across the area of operations. The situation throughout the theatre remains militarily stable. However, while there is general compliance concerning the entity armed forces, the police of both entities still do not meet internationally accepted standards. The actions, through recent operations to control the Specialist Police as forces under the General Framework Agreement for Peace, are proceeding well.

8. During the reporting period, a total of 481 inspections of weapons storage sites were carried out by SFOR. By party, this figure comprises 170 Bosniac, 130 Croat and 181 Bosnian Serb inspections. SFOR continues to confiscate weapons which, after a period of time to allow for appeals, are normally destroyed. With the exception of the incident in Banja Luka involving the Bosnian Serb Specialist Police, the following weapons were confiscated over the past month: from the Bosniac Army, 20 AK47 rifles, 20,000 7.62 rounds of ammunition and an item of electronic warfare equipment; from the Bosnian Croat Forces, two AK47 rifles, two 76mm anti-tank guns, 100 tank rounds, 169 napalm rounds and five small arms; from the Bosnian Serb Army, 50 AK47 rifles, one M80 rocket launcher. Two long-barrel weapons, 1,633 7.62 rounds of ammunition, 16 pistols, 40 hand grenades and six rifle grenades; and from civil components, 160 pounds of ordnance and one pistol.

9. During the past month, SFOR has removed, or participated in the removal of 10 unauthorized checkpoints (three Bosnian Serb and seven Federation). It is apparent that the number of checkpoints has been reduced through the efforts of IPTF with SFOR support. Equally apparent is that checkpoints continue to be intermittently established in both the Federation and the Republika Srpska. Specialist Police have been involved in a significant number of these incidents and the SFOR operation SECURE BEAT, a four-phase plan, starting on 8 August to bring the Entities' Specialist Police under article 1A of the General Framework Agreement for Peace as Forces and to ensure their compliance with the IPTF civil

police restructuring programme, should assist freedom of movement. Republika Srpska customs and police officials continue to harass trucks of non-governmental organizations transporting humanitarian aid items into the Federation.

10. During the reporting period, SFOR monitored a total of 662 training and movement activities (249 Bosniac, 203 Bosnian Croat and 210 Bosnian Serb).

11. Over the reported period, all the training and movement bans imposed by SFOR on the parties for failing to meet de-mining requirements were lifted: on 28 July, the ban on HVO TSG corps by the multinational division (SW); on 17 August, the three bans on the third VRS corps, the HVO ORASJF group and the II ABIH corps by the multinational division (N). On 1 August, the training ban due to discrepancies in previous movement and training activities imposed on the seventy-seventh VRS regiment of the seventh Army corps was lifted by the multinational division (SE). Additionally, on 6 August, the ban on VRS air and air defence activities due to radar and missile infringements was lifted.

12. Over the reporting period, entity armed forces, under SFOR supervision, removed 3,484 explosive devices (224 anti-tank mines; 3,184 anti-personnel mines and 76 items of unexploded ordnance) from 280 mined areas. Since 10 March, 2,452 anti-tank mines, 10,403 anti-personnel mines and 712 items of unexploded ordnance have been removed from a total of 1,307 areas. The rate of operations in the first week of the reporting period was slow mainly due to the spate of accidents in the previous reporting cycle. There have been three accidents this month, with two of them resulting in serious injuries. In spite of those accidents, this is the best monthly performance yet reported. In general, compliance improved considerably. The Bosniac Army tends to be consistent with its compliance; the Bosnian Croat Army has improved considerably and the Bosnian Serb Army has in fact performed better than was expected, although they remain the least compliant of the three Armies. The threat of training and movement bans is a significant factor.

13. Since 20 July 1997, there have been two meetings of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line Subcommission, held on 31 July and 12 August 1997 in Lukavica. All three parties were in attendance. During the Subcommission meetings the negotiators for the Federation (Bosniacs and Croats) and the Republika Srpska reached agreement on a proposal to exchange land south of Klujc (Dobocani, in favour of the Federation) for land north of Sanski Most (Koprivna, in favour of the Republika Srpska). The Agreement must now be ratified by the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation and the Republika Srpska and countersigned by the SFOR Commander for implementation to take place. Additionally, the Republika Srpska made a new map proposal for a gain of territory north-east of Sarajevo which is linked with a Federation proposal in the Kladanj-Vares area made in August 1996. On request of the Federation/Croat negotiator, the discussion on land swaps in the Posavina area was postponed until after the municipal elections.

14. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IPTF and SFOR coordinated and secured the release of two Serb prisoners-of-war held in the Zenica military prison. Acting on information provided by relatives concerning their whereabouts, IPTF discovered the two men locked in a room in a building

situated at the rear of the main administration block, away from the other detention facilities. The prisoners-of-war were transported to Banja Luka and reunited with their families. Ambassador Kai Eide indicated that this was a gross violation of international humanitarian law and the terms of the Peace Agreement and asked Federation authorities to investigate and bring to justice those involved in the human rights violations of these two men. IPTF will also be conducting an investigation. Evidence indicates that the factions continue to hold detainees, notwithstanding the provisions of annex 1A, article IX, Prisoner Exchanges, that comprehensive lists were to be supplied to ICRC to facilitate its work in implementing and monitoring the plan for release and transfer of prisoners.

Cooperation with international organizations

15. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to offer assistance to the international organizations in theatre, and provides security for IPTF inspections, as demonstrated by operation SECURE BEAT (see para. 9 above).

16. Media abuses continued in this period, with the Republika Srpska state radio and television outlet being particularly biased and vitriolic. SFOR and its Civic Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Task Force has increased efforts to work with the Office of the High Representative and the international community on the media problems through several integrated working groups, sharing of resources and coordinated operations to develop means to counter blatant media bias and improve the populace's ability to have alternative access to information.

17. SFOR support of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia investigations continued. The main activities on exhumation sites were carried out in the Brcko and Srebrenica areas, with SFOR providing a secure environment for the Tribunal teams.

18. On the municipal elections, SFOR is working extensively with the other international organizations to help ensure a secure environment for their conduct. A security plan has been developed and approved by the entities that includes instructions concerning the movement of voters.

19. The Supreme Allied Commander of Europe has agreed that arms control experts working for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) may accompany SFOR during routine cantonment inspections. This will help resolve the under-reporting issue by allowing treaty and weapons knowledgeable officers to view holding sites and then assist the parties in correcting their declarations. During the reporting period, Republika Srpska updated its declarations under article IV of the Peace Agreement, adding a further 841 pieces of heavy equipment to its previous declaration.

20. SFOR also supports many other international and local organizations and authorities. The activities occur throughout the country, often within the immediate locale of an SFOR camp. For example, SFOR troops are continuing work on the Tuzla-Brcko railway, with completion due at the beginning of November 1997; a CIMIC Task Force public health team has been assisting in the training of doctors; a telecommunications team has been coordinating efforts for

the movement of equipment and site preparation for the free election radio network in preparation for the municipal elections; veterinary teams have been monitoring cattle in quarantine; and SFOR engineers signed road contracts with Republika Srpska companies on 11 August that should act as prototypes for opening up the Republika Srpska to similar contracting procedures in the future.

21. SFOR and the Office of the High Representative have continued to pursue the issue of opening up the regional airports. Under the General Framework Agreement, SFOR is required gradually to transfer control of the regional airports to the appropriate institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The issue has a clear link to the Sintra deadlines and to reconstituting the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). In response to the latest Serb argument against signing, the Office of the High Representative, on 21 July 1997, issued a legal opinion. Following a series of meetings in the Council of Ministers and bilaterally with the Serb side, pursued by the SFOR Deputy Commander to explain the issue and seek agreement, the memoranda of understanding for Tuzla, Mostar and Banja Luka airports were signed by Dr. Siljadzic and Mr. Tomic following a meeting of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers on 4 August 1997. Mr. Bosic (Serb Co-Chairman) refused to sign.

22. At a meeting on 8 August 1997, the Presidency agreed to the rules of procedures for the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). This development will allow SCMM to move into discussion of more substantive issues. SCMM will coordinate the activities of the armed forces of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee is due to meet at least once a month. The rules of procedure establish the membership of SCMM as the three Members of the Presidency, the Defence Ministers of the Federation and the Republika Srpska and the Chiefs of Staff of the Federation and Republika Srpska armed forces, plus one further nomination from each President. The High Representative, the SFOR Commander and the OSCE Head of Mission, or their representatives, are observers. The Foreign Ministry of Bosnia and Herzegovina will also be represented by an observer. The Members of the Presidency may invite other persons to attend as observers or in an advisory capacity. Members of the Presidency will chair the Committee. The Chairmanship will alternate between the Republika Srpska and the Federation.

Outlook

23. The overall situation in theatre is expected to remain stable, despite continuing increased tension in the Republika Srpska. SFOR will continue to carry out its mission firmly but fairly, without tolerating any recourse to force or violence, or the unauthorized deployment of military or paramilitary forces. In the forthcoming period major activities for SFOR will include support for the municipal elections, support for a free and balanced media and the continuing conduct of Operation SECURE BEAT.

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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 51/195 B of 17 December 1996, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it every three months during its fifty-first session on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). The report, which covers the third three-month period following the submission on 16 June 1997 of the second progress report (A/51/929-S/1997/482), is also submitted in response to the request of the Security Council for regular information on the main developments in Afghanistan.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Military situation

2. The military confrontation between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance continued on all fronts during the reporting period, with the front lines relatively static until 20 July when Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud of the Northern Alliance launched a major attack and captured Charikar and Bagram airbase north of Kabul. This offensive continued until Massoud's forces reached to within 20 to 25 kilometres north of Kabul. The city came within range of rocket and artillery attacks. Taliban counter-offensives and additional military thrusts by Massoud's forces resulted in little change on the ground. Both sides used tanks, heavy artillery, rockets and aerial bombardment during these assaults, with total casualties numbering between 500 and 1,000 fighters. There were also numerous casualties among civilians.

3. In the central region, sporadic fighting took place between the Taliban and forces of the Hezb-i-Wahdat. Some 1,000 Taliban troops, trapped at Sorkh Pars between Massoud and Wahdat forces, managed to escape on foot, leaving behind their heavy weapons. In the west, fighting occurred in the Morghab river area in Badghis Province but with little change in front-line positions. Herat City was relatively calm. In the north-east, Kunduz City, captured by the Taliban in May, remained under their control, as well as much of the remainder of the province and the northern half of Baghlan Province. In early September 1997, forces loyal to Commander Massoud captured the city of Khanabad east of Kunduz and lay siege to the Taliban-held Kunduz airport. In eastern Afghanistan, anti-Taliban forces resorted to hit-and-run tactics, with small-scale attacks in the provinces of Laghman, Kunar and Nangarhar.

4. Mazar-i-Sharif was quiet except for an exchange of small arms fire on 21 August among troops nominally under the control of the Uzbek leader, General Abdul Malik. Calm was quickly restored. However, the situation quickly deteriorated when fighting erupted on 8 September in the city of Khulm (old name Tashkurgan), about 50 km to the east of Mazar. The confrontation started when one of the Northern Alliance's generals attempted to disarm a local commander, who declared himself and his troops loyal to the Taliban. The Taliban forces took advantage of the situation, joined the rebellious field commander and briefly took control of Mazar-i-Sharif airport and reached the outskirts of the city. These developments prompted chaos and looting in Mazar. Local offices of United Nations programmes and agencies operating in the city were also looted. None of the 14 international staff members was injured. Forces of Hezb-i-Wahdat and those loyal to General Malik recaptured the airport on 9 September and pushed the Taliban approximately 40 km east of Mazar. The situation became even more complicated, with General Rashid Dostum's return to Mazar on 12 September from exile in Turkey ostensibly to reclaim from General Malik his position as commander of the Afghan Uzbeks. Many of the armed units of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (NIMA) reportedly declared their loyalty to General Dostum. The overall situation in the area remains volatile.

Political situation

5. While fighting continued between opposing Afghan forces, the political situation in Afghanistan during the period under review remained basically unchanged. The Taliban faction, from its headquarters in Kandahar, continued to control the capital of Kabul and the predominantly Pushtun-populated regions of the country, while the Northern Alliance, comprising principally the Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara populations, controlled their respective areas from Mazar-i-Sharif, Taluqan and Bamyan. The de facto division of the country, largely along ethnic lines, continued to be a troubling aspect of the situation.

6. The six constituent parties of the Northern Alliance continued their efforts to form a more coherent political grouping under the name "United Islamic and National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan" (UNIFSA). The Front's new government, announced in mid-August, received a setback on 21 August when its new Prime Minister, Abdul Rahim Ghaffoorzai, died in a plane crash at Bamyan airport.

7. Rejecting the Front's claim to be the legal government of Afghanistan, the Taliban continued efforts to gain international recognition through the dispatch of delegations to Japan, the Republic of Korea, China and Thailand. In support of their position, the Taliban stated that the people residing in areas under their control were living in peace and safety. However, the continued factional fighting north of Kabul and elsewhere resulted in an increase in the number of internally displaced persons, many of whom had been forcibly removed from their homes and in some cases arrested merely for suspected sympathy with the anti-Taliban forces. The reality remained that Afghanistan was deadlocked in civil war, and its people bereft of effective government.

8. Foreign military support, in particular the resupply of weapons and ammunition to the two sides, continued unabated during the period under review. During the July/August fighting north of Kabul, witnesses reported that on some days as many as three or four transport aircraft were unloading their cargoes of arms and ammunition at Mazar-i-Sharif airport. There were also reliable eyewitness reports of truck convoys moving cargoes of arms and ammunition into Afghanistan during the month of August. The supply of war matériel, along with fuel and other logistical support, to all the factions only served to prolong the fighting and to vitiate United Nations attempts to mediate an end to the conflict.

Humanitarian situation

9. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remained serious. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported in August that the number of direct victims of the conflict had risen sharply since the beginning of the year. Fighting in the north of Kabul, for example, had resulted in a total of 200,000 people displaced. Furthermore, ICRC also observed that the death rate among war casualties in districts north of the capital was alarmingly high, with one out of every two to three casualties resulting in death owing to lack of appropriate care. A joint mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that although the cereal harvest for 1997 was expected to be 18 per cent higher than the 1996 harvest of 3.1 million metric tons, emergency food aid was nevertheless required to meet the needs of some 1.75 million people.

10. A survey of landmine problems revealed that the situation was worse than previously thought. New information indicated that nearly 777 km^2 have been contaminated by mines, instead of 550 km^2, as assessed previously. Of this, 322 km^2 were in residential, commercial, agricultural and other areas classified as "high priority", and required urgent removal. However, the Mine Action Programme was faced with a severe lack of funding and urgently required US$ 4 million to maintain its essential activities.

11. Some 50 representatives of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, donors, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) participated in a meeting on 2 July in Islamabad to review the implementation of the 1997 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Assistance to Afghanistan. As of 3 September, total pledges and contributions against the Appeal were $41 million, representing 31 per cent of

the total requirement of $133 million. Mr. James Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, visited Kandahar on 2 September. He visited two United Nations-supported community-based projects, met with representatives of United Nations agencies in Afghanistan and had a meeting with representatives of the Taliban.

12. With respect to gender issues, I sent a letter to all members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in June, requesting their cooperation in the implementation of the policies and measures adopted by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs to promote the adherence of Afghan authorities to international legal instruments on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls. Ms. Angela King, my Special Adviser on gender issues, chaired the meetings of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Group on Gender Issues in Afghanistan.

13. With the permission of the Uzbek authorities, essential commodities were transported in late July from Termez to the northern Afghanistan city of Hairaton by barges. WFP brought in almost 2,000 tons of wheat; ICRC, 3,000 tons of wheat flour; and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), 10,000 litres of diesel. In Mazar-i-Sharif, humanitarian operations were temporarily suspended in September owing to increased fighting in and around the city.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIAL MISSION

14. Despite prolonged hostilities during the summer months, the Special Mission continued its contacts with the warring parties in an effort to engage them in political dialogue. In meetings with UNSMA, both the Taliban and their Northern Alliance opponents claimed a commitment to a negotiated settlement. However, their deeds ran contrary to the positions stated to UNSMA and revealed a desire to gain the upper hand over their adversaries through military conquest. Mission Head Mr. Norbert Holl held consultations on the Afghan situation from 18 to 27 June in Tashkent, Moscow, Paris, Bonn and Rome, meeting with Foreign Ministry and other officials and with former King Zahir Shah. Following his return to UNSMA in early July, Mr. Holl undertook a shuttle with the Afghan parties, beginning on 10 July with the Northern Alliance and concluding on 7 August with the Taliban. The purpose was to explore the possibility of holding direct negotiations at a neutral location outside the region between one representative of each side under UNSMA's good offices. The idea was to begin a step-by-step approach to reach agreement first on a ceasefire and exchange of prisoners, then to foster broader talks aimed at national reconciliation and a durable political settlement.

15. Both sides agreed on the necessity for direct talks and neither rejected the UNSMA proposal. However, the Taliban's insistence that the Northern Alliance take certain "confidence-building measures", in particular the release of some or all of their prisoners, particularly their emissaries who had come to Mazar to negotiate, was flatly rejected by General Abdul Malik of the Northern Alliance. General Malik stated that it was "illogical" to release prisoners of war before a ceasefire was arranged. He also made his own demand for the demilitarization of Kabul. In a second round of talks, the Northern Alliance appeared ready to meet (preferably within the region, albeit not in Pakistan)

without preconditions. The Taliban, however, refused to drop their demand for prior POW release.

16. Parallel with Mr. Holl's negotiating effort, the Governments of both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan continued to have their own contacts in Afghanistan with the parties. The Government of Pakistan has attempted to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue under United Nations auspices. This effort so far has not led to tangible results.

17. Regarding the prisoner issue, a number of prisoners interviewed by UNSMA personnel in Maimana, the capital of Faryab Province in north-western Afghanistan, and in Bamyan freely admitted that they came from various areas in Pakistan but it was not possible to determine whether they had any ties with that country's military.

IV. APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL ENVOY

18. In view of the continued conflict and human tragedy in Afghanistan and the stalemated efforts to involve all the parties concerned in constructive and viable political dialogue, on 29 July, I appointed Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as my Special Envoy on a short mission to consult interested and relevant countries and parties, as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and to present a comprehensive review of the United Nations peacemaking activities in Afghanistan. Mr. Brahimi started his mission on 15 August. After the completion of his mission, I will report to the General Assembly and Security Council accordingly.